

Historic, archived doc

Do not assume content reflects  
scientific knowledge, policies, o



1 Ag 74 M  
723

# HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK

*in the UNITED STATES*



*Miscellaneous Publication No. 723*

FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1 Ag 74 M  
723

1911

1911

1911

# HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK IN THE UNITED STATES

The American home, which plays a vital role in the social and economic life of our Nation, is largely responsible for determining the character and quality of our future citizens. Today's children must face the world with confidence and courage, supported by strong bodies and healthy minds. It is in the family circle that they first learn to understand and apply the concepts of freedom, personal responsibility, and respect for individual differences that are basic to our democratic way of life.

The home is especially important as an economic unit. Expenditures for food, shelter, and clothing take a major share of the income for family living. Whatever is left goes for education, recreation, savings, and cultural interests. Since the margin between income and cost of necessities is small for most

families, improved living depends upon expert management of resources.

Women are primarily responsible for maintaining the home. They do most of the family buying and exert a major influence on the character and personality of family members.

In the rapidly changing pattern of modern-day living, homemakers need an up-to-date reliable source of information that will help them in solving problems of the family and community. Home demonstration work is designed to meet that need.

## *What It Is*

Home demonstration work is an essential part of the educational program of the Cooperative Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics. This nationwide system of out-of-school education was established by Congress through passage of the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914. The act gave authority for the United States Department of Agriculture and the State land-grant colleges to join forces

in establishing and maintaining an out-of-school educational program to aid rural men, women, boys, and girls in improving their farms, their homes, and their communities. Under the terms of the act, funds for extension work are provided by Federal, State, and county governments and are administered by the cooperative extension services of the land-grant colleges.

The county is the key unit of the Extension Service. Agricultural agents, home demonstration agents, and in some instances associate agents and 4-H Club agents, are located in the county extension offices, usually in the county seat. They are employed by their State colleges and are responsible both to the college and to the people of the county for the development and conduct of the extension educational program.

The role of the Extension Service is clearly defined as educational. Since the beginning, its basic philosophy has been to "help people help themselves." An essential feature is that extension programs are planned by the people in each county. All extension agents work cooperatively with families and com-

munity leaders in helping them to analyze farm and home situations, to recognize major problems, and to develop programs that will aid them in making any desired changes. A major responsibility of the extension agents is to get the results of research in agriculture and home economics to families in a form which they can easily understand and apply.

## *How the Home Demonstration Agent Works*

The job of the home demonstration agent is one of helping families to improve undesirable situations which they recognize and want to do something about. Because she is a home economist and a member of the State land-grant college staff, the home demonstration agent has access to a vast store of information about matters concerning the home and family. This information covers such subjects as family financial management, nutrition and health, clothing and textiles, home improvement and work simplification, child care and training, and many other topics related to family living.



Though the home demonstration agent is an educator, she is not a teacher in the usually accepted classroom sense. Her job is to encourage families to analyze their present situation and to supply them with information that will help them to make whatever change they feel is desirable, whether it be a remodeled kitchen, a family budget, or a recreation center for their community.

The agent works with an advisory committee in her county. This committee helps to plan the home demonstration program and to devise ways to make the help of the agent available to all families. Since home demonstration programs are planned locally on the basis of special interests and needs of the families in each area, there is a great variation in programs throughout the country.

The home demonstration agent conducts her work through home demonstration groups, general meetings, special institutes or clinics, office and home visits, and by using exhibits, radio, television, and the press. Through such methods, more than 6 million women annually receive assistance from home demonstration agents.

## *Nearly 700,000 Women Serve as Local Leaders*

One of the most effective ways of reaching many homemakers is through group meetings. About 1½ million women are learning to improve their homemaking skills and abilities through educational programs in over 66,000 such groups. Representatives from the groups attend training schools conducted by the home demonstration agent or a specialist from the college and return home to share the training with their neighbors. These unpaid volunteer workers are known as "local leaders."

Though home demonstration agents do some direct teaching in home demonstration groups, the local leader system is an important feature of home demonstration work. It greatly extends the efforts of the agent and at the same time helps to develop leadership ability and self-confidence in the leaders. Since there are many training schools for leaders, and women assume different leadership roles each year, this method of carrying on extension work has become an important means of developing strong community leadership.

## *Serves All Families*

Although the Extension Service was originally designed to serve farm people, the gap between town and country has narrowed greatly since 1914. Modern transportation and communication facilities have removed the isolation of the farm home, while electricity and laborsaving equipment have helped to relieve drudgery for both the rural and urban homemaker. Since many problems in homemaking are common to both rural and urban homes, home demonstration agents note an increasing interest in home demonstration work in urban areas. One way of serving urban homes has been through the use of radio and television. In 1955, 37.3 percent of families assisted through home demonstration work were on the farm, 39.3 percent were urban, and 23.4 percent were rural nonfarm.

## *Agent Must Know Latest Research*

To do her job most effectively, the county home demonstration agent must keep up to date on re-

search findings both in home economics and in subject-matter teaching methods.

A staff of extension workers at each land-grant college is responsible for interpreting the results of research and for keeping the agents informed.

Specialists in the Federal Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture assist the State extension workers.

Through this method of inservice training, the latest research information is rapidly translated into improved living for American families.

### *A Few Statistics Reveal Size and Scope of the Program*

Home demonstration work is an established function of the land-grant colleges in the 48 States, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

More than 6 million women participated in the program in 1955.

Approximately 4,000 home demonstration agents, associates, and assistants give professional leadership to the program.

Nearly 700,000 women served as local leaders in carrying on the educational program.

The home demonstration agent devotes about 67 percent of her time to home demonstration work and 33 percent to 4-H Club and older youth work.

Types of assistance given:

|   | <i>Number of<br/>families</i> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Improved housing-----                       | 1, 624, 541                   |
| Furnishings and equipment-----              | 2, 350, 559                   |
| Family economics and home management-----   | 2, 361, 542                   |
| Clothing the family-----                    | 3, 389, 278                   |
| Feeding the family-----                     | 4, 362, 200                   |
| Child development and family relations----- | 1, 691, 825                   |

## *Additional Information*

For more detailed information about home demonstration work of the Cooperative Extension Service, write to the Federal Extension Service, United

States Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., or to the director of Extension Service or home demonstration leader located at the State land-grant college. The addresses of the State home demonstration leaders are given on the following list.

## ADDRESSES OF STATE HOME DEMONSTRATION LEADERS

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Alabama</i> -----     | Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn.                        |
| <i>Alaska</i> -----      | University of Alaska, College.                                |
| <i>Arizona</i> -----     | University of Arizona, Tucson.                                |
| <i>Arkansas</i> -----    | 421½ West Capitol Avenue, Little Rock.                        |
| <i>California</i> -----  | College of Agriculture, University of California, Berkeley 4. |
| <i>Colorado</i> -----    | Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College, Fort Collins.   |
| <i>Connecticut</i> ----- | University of Connecticut, Storrs.                            |
| <i>Delaware</i> -----    | University of Delaware, Newark.                               |
| <i>Florida</i> -----     | University of Florida, Tallahassee.                           |
| <i>Georgia</i> -----     | College of Agriculture, University of Georgia, Athens.        |
| <i>Hawaii</i> -----      | University of Hawaii, Honolulu 14.                            |

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Idaho</i> -----         | University of Idaho, Moscow.                                  |
| <i>Illinois</i> -----      | College of Agriculture, University of Illinois, Urbana.       |
| <i>Indiana</i> -----       | Purdue University, Lafayette.                                 |
| <i>Iowa</i> -----          | Iowa State College, Ames.                                     |
| <i>Kansas</i> -----        | Kansas State College, Manhattan.                              |
| <i>Kentucky</i> -----      | College of Agriculture, University of Kentucky, Lexington 29. |
| <i>Louisiana</i> -----     | Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge 3.                    |
| <i>Maine</i> -----         | College of Agriculture, University of Maine, Orono.           |
| <i>Maryland</i> -----      | University of Maryland, College Park.                         |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> ----- | University of Massachusetts, Amherst.                         |
| <i>Michigan</i> -----      | Michigan State University, East Lansing.                      |
| <i>Minnesota</i> -----     | University Farm, St. Paul 1.                                  |
| <i>Mississippi</i> -----   | Mississippi State College, State College.                     |
| <i>Missouri</i> -----      | College of Agriculture, University of Missouri, Columbia.     |
| <i>Montana</i> -----       | Montana State College, Bozeman.                               |
| <i>Nebraska</i> -----      | College of Agriculture, University of Nebraska, Lincoln 1.    |
| <i>Nevada</i> -----        | University of Nevada, Reno.                                   |
| <i>New Hampshire</i> ----  | University of New Hampshire, Durham.                          |



|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>New Jersey</i> -----     | State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts of Rutgers University, New Brunswick.   |
| <i>New Mexico</i> -----     | New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, State College.                    |
| <i>New York</i> -----       | State College of Home Economics, Cornell University, Ithaca.                           |
| <i>North Carolina</i> ----- | State College Station, North Carolina State College, Raleigh.                          |
| <i>North Dakota</i> -----   | North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo.  |
| <i>Ohio</i> -----           | Ohio State University, Columbus 10.  |
| <i>Oklahoma</i> -----       | Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater.                              |
| <i>Oregon</i> -----         | Oregon State College, Corvallis.   |
| <i>Pennsylvania</i> -----   | The Pennsylvania State University, University Park.                                    |
| <i>Puerto Rico</i> -----    | University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras.  |
| <i>Rhode Island</i> -----   | University of Rhode Island, Kingston.  |
| <i>South Carolina</i> ----- | Winthrop College, Rock Hill.   |
| <i>South Dakota</i> -----   | State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, University of South Dakota, Brookings. |
| <i>Tennessee</i> -----      | College of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville 7.                          |



|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Texas</i> -----         | Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College System, College Station.                          |
| <i>Utah</i> -----          | Utah State Agricultural College, Logan.   |
| <i>Vermont</i> -----       | College of Agriculture, University of Vermont, Burlington.                                  |
| <i>Virginia</i> -----      | Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg.   |
| <i>Washington</i> -----    | State College of Washington, Pullman.   |
| <i>West Virginia</i> ----- | College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics, West Virginia University, Morgantown. |
| <i>Wisconsin</i> -----     | 438 University Farm Place, Madison 6.   |
| <i>Wyoming</i> -----       | College of Agriculture, University of Wyoming, Laramie.                                     |

☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1956    O—388288

---

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government  
 Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C.    Price 10 cents

